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Synergivity Touts Workflow Enhancements in MDCMS

by Alex Woodie

Organizations that use Midrange Dynamics' IBM i change management system will see a big improvement in the way that change requests flow through the system with MDCMS version 6.8. Officials with Synergivity Software, the North American distributors of MDCMS, say that as a result of enhanced integration between the CMS and the workflow systems, users will be able to drive change management processes directly from the workflow product.

Synergivity Software has been selling MDCMS to IBM i shops in North America since it signed a distribution deal with Switzerland-based Midrange Dynamics two years ago. The Peterborough, New Hampshire-based company's principals, change management veterans Marty Kilgallen and Mary Langen, say the product's simplicity and ease of use are its primary selling points.

That story gets even more compelling with MDCMS version 6.8, which Midrange Dynamics shipped in late 2011. With this release, new links have been put in place that connect the core MDCMS product with MDWorkflow, a Web-based product that enables central management of projects, tasks, deployment, and workflow across IBM i and open systems.

"With version 6.8, users can actually use MDWorkflow to fire off the change management process without having to step out of the workflow process to get to the change management process," Kilgallen tells *IT Jungle*.

This means that MDCMS users can now manage MDWorkflow tasks and subtasks--including full permission to add, edit, copy, cancel, display, or close a task or subtask--directly from MDCMS' 5250 interface. Users can also filter the tasks and subtasks in the 5250 screen as they would on the MDWorkflow interface, and warning messages will pop up when a user tries to close a task or subtask without fulfilling all of the requirements.

"It all flows very cleanly and naturally through the change management process," Kilgallen says. "When changes are completed or when they need to be approved, it goes back into the workflow system automatically without anybody having to jump back and forth in the products to continue the role management capability."

MDWorkflow functions as a plug-in to either MDCMS, the green-screen change management system for IBM i systems, or MDOpen, an Eclipse-based product that provides change management capabilities to open systems. While MDWorkflow is sold as part of a premium bundle that includes other tools, such as the MDXREF cross-referencing tool and the MDSEC security module, the fact is most MDCMS customers end up with the additional bundle as part of their overall purchase, which rarely exceeds \$30,000.

The tightened integration between MDCMS and MDWorkflow module helps to showcase the role-management capabilities of MDWorkflow. In a typical workflow, there are clearly delegated roles assigned to different people. The programmers get all the glory for their coding capabilities, but overseeing their work is typically an IT project leader who coordinates their work with the operations people who implement the changes, the quality assurance people who keep things from breaking, and business-level personnel who stand between the IT crew and the owners, customers, and the dreaded auditors looking for violations of Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX).

"One of the key benefits is that it clearly determines role identification," Kilgallen says. "You can determine as many roles as you need to through the system, and MDWorkflow links the project and the process to the roles. It really addresses all of the role management requirements of SOX rules."

Version 6.8 brings several other enhancements, including the capability in MDOpen to request objects directly from the IFS or from a remote server; new request for promotion (RFP) exit points and email communication capabilities; new source comparison functions when checking out code; the ability for Help/Systems' Robot/SCHEDULE job data to be controlled by MDCMS; a new API for accepting RFPs in the IFS from Linoma Software's GoAnywhere managed file transfer (MFT) software; new MDSEC reports; and support for tab-delineated CSV report output, among others.

Since MDCMS version 6.8 shipped in December, Midrange Dynamics has shipped several newer releases of the product. Release notes can be found at the company's website. For more information, North American organizations should see www.synergivivity.com.